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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [TRGY](#) [TSPL](#) [ELTN](#) [EUN](#) [EPET](#) [FI](#)
SUBJECT: U.S.-EU HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
CLEAN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN HELSINKI

Summary

¶1. At the first-ever High Level Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development (HLD) October 24-25 in Helsinki, the U.S. and EU agreed to strengthen bilateral efforts in areas including clean coal, carbon sequestration, energy efficiency, renewables, methane recovery, and biofuels. There was reaffirmation that the U.S. and EU share common objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the global environment, enhancing energy security, and cutting air pollution and that the two sides are already working together in a number of fora. The High Level Dialogue was established at the EU-U.S. Summit in Vienna in June, with the objective of building on existing transatlantic initiatives and further advancing the 2005 G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action for Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development. In Helsinki, U.S. Delegation Chair Under Secretary Dobriansky expressed satisfaction with the give-and-take during this two-day dialogue. At the closing press conference, she announced that the U.S. would host the next HLD meeting in 2007. German representatives stated that as President of the European Commission and head of the G-8 in 2007, Germany will emphasize energy efficiency and follow up on other topics from the current HLD agenda. German Head of Delegation said strongly that the next 2007 HLD should take place in the U.S. in May under German leadership. Media coverage reflected the positive tone of the dialogue. Text of an agreed joint press statement is at para 10.

Principal Participants

¶2. U.S.:
U/S Paula Dobriansky, Department of State
Chairman James Connaughton, White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
Under Secretary David Garman, Department of Energy (DOE)
Associate Assistant Administrator Robert Meyers, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Ambassador Marilyn Ware, U.S. Embassy Helsinki
Ambassador Boyden Gray, USEU

Finland:
Minister Jan-Erik Enestam, Ministry of the Environment
Minister Mauri Pekkarinen, Ministry of Trade and Industry,

EU Commission:

Director General Mogens Peter Carl, DG Environment
Deputy Director General Fabrizio Barbaso, DG Transport and
Energy

Germany:

State Secretary Matthias Machnig, Ministry of Environment
Director General Urban Rid, Ministry of Environment

Themes and Highlights

13. During two half-days of intensive working sessions, delegations from the U.S., Finland, the European Commission and Germany covered a broad array of topics related to climate change, clean energy and sustainable development. Reflecting an approach of "a little bit for everybody," discussion sessions included on-going U.S.-EU cooperation; greenhouse gas; carbon capture and storage; cleaner energy, including renewable energy and clean diesel; cleaner vehicles; and biodiversity. The talks demonstrated that the U.S. and EU have far more in common than we have differences on a broad range of issues. The dialogue was thorough, technical, and amicable throughout. What follows are highlights of selected HLD themes. We have also noted certain action and follow-up items for the coming weeks and months.

Lowering Greenhouse Gas Emissions

14. While EU Commission and Finnish officials called for a Kyoto-like post 2012 approach to further reduce emissions, U.S. officials advanced the idea that government should act as a catalyst for private sector innovation, such as the

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development of clean coal. Delegates stressed, however, that U.S.-EU bilateral cooperation was not enough - cleaner coal technology needed to be shared with rapidly developing countries like India and China. Both sides agreed that housing, consumer products, cars, tires, and lighting were all ripe sectors for further U.S.-EU bilateral cooperation. U/S Garman noted that the U.S. is aggressively moving forward with carbon capture, storage and sequestration technologies; however, complicated legal frameworks present cumbersome barriers. U.S. and EU delegates shared views on the effectiveness of the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum and agreed to strengthen cooperation.

15. U/S Dobriansky called upon participants to advance the Gleneagles Plan of Action and work together to address climate change through developing technologies, while focusing on improving energy security and reducing poverty by ensuring global economic development. She highlighted the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate as a model for Kyoto and non-Kyoto countries alike to foster economic growth while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. She cited three examples for further transatlantic cooperation: 1) methane capture and recovery, 2) improvements in energy efficiency including the aviation sector and further use of programs like EPA's and DOE's Energy Star, and 3) building international standards for biofuels, particularly biodiesel.

Clean Energy Fuelling Clean Vehicles

16. Both the U.S. and EU recognized the need for a mix of traditional and alternative (complementary) energy sources to meet collective energy needs, especially in the transportation sector. While Europe tends to support regulatory (punitive) measures to reduce emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases, the U.S. prefers a market-

based approach that creates incentives for the private sector to develop new technologies and for consumers to utilize those technologies. CEQ's Connaughton pointed to U.S. income tax cuts that generated incentives for consumers to replace dated technology in their homes with newer, more efficient forms. Both sides recognized the need for a breakthrough in technologies for the storage of energy from renewable sources, and identified this as an area for collaboration. EU officials emphasized that developing renewable energy is a top priority and that the EU's new energy policy is intended to improve competitiveness while decreasing emissions and energy dependence.

17. EPA AAA Meyers highlighted recent U.S. regulations to reduce emissions by up to 95 percent in cars and passenger trucks and 90 percent in heavy duty trucks and non-road vehicles. U.S. officials recognized that better use of diesel would reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and overall emissions. Several EU delegates lamented that biofuels may have a negative environmental impact on biodiversity and land use, particularly in Europe. U/S Garman emphasized the promise of science, technology and research in achieving a sustainable energy future, and he cited numerous examples related to possible future energy production, transmission and storage. He expressed hope that next year's HLD would focus on advancing opportunities for U.S.-EU collaboration on basic energy research.

Biodiversity Loss: Policies and Opportunities for Joint Efforts

18. DG Carl highlighted Commission and member state efforts to preserve biodiversity. In addition to conserving national parks, the EU has identified 2,000 sites, (20 percent of EU territory), where an environmental impact study assessing biodiversity is required prior to commercial development. Dobriansky underscored U.S. efforts to focus on both domestic and international policies to preserve biodiversity, including healthy forest initiatives, reurbanization with landscape corridors for migration, stringent endangered species laws, marine sanctuary laws, and prevention of over-fishing. The U.S. leverages environmental and labor clauses of free trade agreements with developing nations to address tropical deforestation, a policy approach the EU Commission expressed interest in

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adopting. Both sides agreed they are interested in moving beyond arresting the extinction of endangered species to focusing on their restoration.

Comment

19. Despite earlier disagreements with the Commission on an HLD agenda that included both energy and climate change, the Finnish Presidency succeeded in pulling together a discussion that successfully explored the synergies between energy policy goals and actions on addressing climate change, reducing air pollution and improving the global environment. The U.S. was able to underscore for the press and conference delegates that EU-U.S. cooperation is ongoing on these issues, and the US has remained engaged by highlighting the comprehensive 2005 G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action. Kyoto came up, but not often, and its mention provided opportunities for the U.S. side to highlight the growth of the U.S. economy and accompanying decreases in the growth rate of emissions. As U/S Dobriansky noted, we have a tremendous public diplomacy opportunity to "celebrate our successes." Environment Minister Enestam confirmed to U/S Dobriansky that the Finns view the HLD as a highlight of their Presidency and hope that it has laid the foundation for future engagement.

¶10. Text of joint U.S.-EU press release
EU and U.S. will continue dialogue on climate change,
clean energy and sustainable development

Joint Press Release

The European Union and the United States held the inaugural meeting of the EU-U.S. High Level Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development in Helsinki, Finland, on October 24-25, 2006.

At the EU-U.S. Summit in Vienna in June, the leaders agreed to establish this dialogue in recognition of the serious and linked challenges in tackling climate change, promoting clean energy and achieving sustainable development globally.

The objective of the Dialogue is to build on existing transatlantic initiatives and further advance the 2005 G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action for Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development. The talks are guided by the ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

EU and U.S. delegations at the Helsinki meeting highlighted the substantial and growing level of U.S.-European collaboration and explored areas for further work.

Discussion topics included: policies and measures to promote low greenhouse gas emission technologies; cleaner energy; cleaner and more efficient vehicles; and biodiversity loss.

The two sides recognized their common objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the global environment, enhancing energy security, and cutting air pollution.

Both sides underlined the importance of creating the right mix of both supply and demand side policies, including a variety of market-based mechanisms to accelerate commercial use of clean technologies.

The EU and U.S. delegations agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation including to

- Promote the commercial deployment of clean coal and carbon sequestration technologies, including through the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum;

- Promote energy efficiency, particularly in the transportation sector and for buildings and appliances;

- Enhance methane recovery including through the Methane-to-Markets Partnership;

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- Research, develop and deploy second-generation biofuels;

- Overcome barriers to the use of renewable energy sources and biofuels, including through the development of international standards;

- Address global biodiversity loss through natural resource conservation and other joint efforts; and

- Enhance energy access for sustainable development

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continue joint dialogue and efforts under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change including work on long term cooperative action in the process established in Montreal in December ¶2005.

The participants agreed to continue the dialogue through annual meetings. The next High Level Meeting will be in 2007 in the U.S.

Finland's Environment Minister Jan-Erik Enestam and Minister of Trade and Industry Mauri Pekkarinen hosted the meeting for the EU Presidency, along with Environment Director General Mogens Peter Carl and Transport and Energy Deputy Director General Fabrizio Barbaso from the European Commission. The United States delegation, led by Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, was co-chaired by White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton and Under Secretary of Energy David Garman. Other participants

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included Secretary of State, Ministry of the Environment, Matthias Machnig from Germany, upcoming EU Presidency, and representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

End joint press release.

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